

The Cerebral Rift

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Searching For Netlabels and Creative Commons Music

📅 Posted on July 31, 2013 👤 by George De Bruin



Music Icon

Last week I linked an article that listed seven resources for finding Creative Commons music on Twitter, G+, and Facebook. It was a good article for a quick list of some sites to look at. However, I immediately realized that there was one site I would have included that was missing. That started me thinking: what sources do I use routinely that others might find interesting?

That lead me to thinking about writing up a quick guide of my own. Not just for a few download sites, but some other resources well: reviews, music charts, podcasts, news, social-media sites, aggregated and curated collections, etc. There really is a lot of resources available for those of you who are interested in directly supporting artists and getting away from the music industry. (Sometime I will have to explain the

rationale behind supporting artists directly, instead of buying from the music industry – but that's a long long story.) Just take it from me for now: checking out these sites, and doing a little digging will be worth your time. You may be very surprised by what you find.

So, here's my quick intro guide to finding Netlabels and Creative Commons music.

The Big Sites

There are several sites that get the most traffic when it comes to searching for Creative Commons music. Here are the ones that get the most exposure in Creative Commons circles:

Jamendo: possibly the best known of all the sites (except possibly for Bandcamp). The site is about downloading music, previewing music, and building something of a social network with things like stations, popularity lists, recommendations and playlists. They also I feature a system to allow licensing of music for commercial use.

Magnatune: possibly the closest competitor to Jamendo, yet different. Magnatune is more like a

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record label in that they closely curate their collection and only release works they feel are of top quality. All releases are under a CC BY-NC-SA license so you can use and distribute them for any non-commercial use you see fit. However to actually download releases from the site you have to pay for a membership. That membership is then used to pay the artist based on the downloads.

I really love this site for the high quality of the releases they make available.

Internet Archive Netlabels: This is the mother-load (so to speak) of places to find Netlabels. With over 2,000 Sub-collections (individual Netlabels) and over 36,000 individual releases it is the most expansive collection available. Quite a few of the better known labels are represented here, as well as quite a few labels that aren't well-known at all.

A hint about using this resource: since there are a lot of releases on any given day, you can be overwhelmed trying to sort through all of the releases. What I do is use the RSS feeds for labels that are of interest to me in my Feed Reader software. That way I can keep track of the new releases from the labels, and listen to the first track from each of them. If the track interests me, then I go to the release page and check it out more.

BandCamp: is a great resource for finding new music. However, for those that are interested in Creative Commons specific music you need to be careful. Look at the bottom of the release page for a copyright notice. If there isn't a Creative Commons deed specified, then it isn't a Creative Commons release.

CCMixer: Is a great resource for finding all sorts of Creative Commons music, instrumentals, vocal tracks, etc. With dig.CCMixer you can find music for use in podcasts, film soundtracks and even commercial projects. It's just a great all-around resource.

Free Music Archive: FMA has been around for a few years. It's a project of WFMU radio station, and one of the largest curated collections of freely downloadable music you will find. However, not all the downloads are Creative Commons releases, so you have to keep your eyes on that. What is interesting about FMA is that you can follow specific curators, or look for music by genre. You can also sign up and become a curator yourself, should you have the desire.

Soundcloud: Lots of artists are posting their music over on SoundCloud. It's a good place to check out the works of specific artists. Again, as with BandCamp and FMA, you need to check closely to see if a release is actually under a Creative Commons license.

Aggregators

SonicSquirrel: This is an aggregator of Netlabels which mostly grew out of the original Demo Scene. The site is a bit quirky to navigate, however they cover a lot of netlabels that don't show up in other places. There is a lot more electronica, minimalist, and noise music in this collection than many other sites I've been to.

CCTrax: This is a more recent addition to the ranks of Creative Commons based aggregators. It is a hand-curated collection by @deeload. He does a great job of working with a lot of netlabels to pull together releases that are mostly interesting. He seems to emphasize more House and Techno styles, however his ambient, trip-hop and hip-hop collections are pretty fantastic.

Fwonk: What is Fwonk? Is it a netlabel? Yes. Is it an aggregated / curated music collection? Yes. Is it a podcast? Yes. (Although I haven't seen any new podcasts for a while.) It's really a site that needs to be checked out and evaluated by each person to decide if they are of value. For a while I was finding a few releases through them, but recently not as much.

Radio / Streaming

Most of the sites listed above you can stream through. There are few others that are specifically about streaming / listening, and not as much about downloading.

CCHits: This is a Top of the Charts style page where you can find what are the most popular tracks. There's over 100 tracks on the chart at any given time, and it is updated daily. There are also shows you can listen to: Daily Exposure (new tracks), a Weekly Review show and a Monthly Charts show.

FreeMusi.cc: This is a large juke box of close to 20,000 creative commons tracks. You can search, select tracks, make a playlist and listen to the tracks. All of the tracks have a source link to the download page on the Internet Archive.

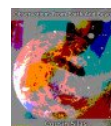
Creative Commons Reviews

Here's just a couple of sites that provide reviews of Creative Commons releases. There are lots

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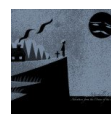
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more than this, but this is just a few off the top of my head.

Cerebral Rift: If you are reading this article, you are likely on the site. I try to produce a few of reviews each week, although sometimes I get distracted with other news stories that are going on. I also started a new feature recently where I will write a feature / spotlight article on some mixes that I've found over the last month...consider it a way to sample a netlabel without spending a bunch of time search and listening randomly.

Netlabelism: This is the Net Audio magazine. They are totally dedicated to the Netlabel scene and provide lots of good reviews. Well worth spending some quality time with.

Ojdo: Not specifically a music or Creative Commons site, but he writes reviews of music that he likes. He doesn't care about the age of the release, just that it's good music. And that's all that matters.

Social Networks

Facebook: Just search Facebook for "netlabel" and you will find a lot of people and pages for netlabels. Just be careful about friend-ing too many at once. You might piss off the Facebook Gods.

Twitter: Many netlabels, podcasts, and magazines have accounts on Twitter. They are a good way to keep up with your favorites (especially if you don't use an RSS Feed Reader). The hash tags: #ccmusic, #netlabel and #netaudio will provide good lists of labels to start with.

G+: In particular, there are numerous communities for the Creative Commons. A couple of the more active communities are *freemusic* and *netlabels*.

Newspapers / Dailies

There are quite a few "newspaper" style publications on paper.li. Most of these are aggregated from Twitter, but some include resources from other sites. They are always worth a look.

[The #Netlabel Daily paper.li](#)

[Netlabels paper.li](#)

[Music Message paper.li](#)

[The #Netaudio Daily paper.li](#)

[The #ccmusic Daily](#)

[Octif's #ccmusic Daily](#)

I have all of the above publications embedded into a single page on the CerebralRift under [Netlabel News](#) for easily accessing all the publications at once.

Podcasts

Last, but not least, there are tons and tons of podcasts out there that feature Creative Commons music. There is no way I could list all the available shows. Some of the shows are all Creative Commons, while some aren't. Here are few of the shows that I have listened to:

[The OO Show](#)

[CerebralMix](#) (Okay, yes, I am pimping my own show.)

[Rathole Radio](#)

[The BugCast](#)

CCJam: [MP3](#) or [OGG](#)

Conclusion

Now that's a starter's list. If you can't find music that you like using these resources, well I don't know what to tell you. At some point I am considering starting a link database for many of these resources and adding to it as I find more. I know there are literally hundreds of sites that I have been to that aren't listed here. At some point I will spend some time really picking my brain to come up with a more exhaustive list.

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← MIT report is a whitewash. My statement in response. via TarenSK [Review: Jekyll Wood – Only Son](#) →

7 thoughts on “Searching For Netlabels and Creative Commons Music”



ojdo says:

August 1, 2013 at 4:42 pm

Some more suggestions that I like:

Review blogs

Good Netlables: <http://goodnetlabels.blogspot.com/>

@diffuser: <http://www.adiffuser.net/> (French, but with a monthly podcast and great music selection)

Netlabel list

The blog Acts of Silence maintains a giant list of present and past netlabels:

<http://www.actsofsilence.com/netlabels/>



Snd Chaser says:

August 1, 2013 at 7:17 pm

Thanks for these. I'd seen the **Acts of Silence** list before, but couldn't remember where the site was. **Good Netlabels** is a bit disappointing – pulled up four different reviews, and none of the selections had a Creative Commons License. I like **@diffuser** seems focused on Creative Commons and Art Libre licensed works.



Mediamia says:

August 1, 2013 at 3:23 am

I have added my own free music creative commons website. It's been online 1 year.

<http://mediamia.66ghz.com>



Snd Chaser says:

August 1, 2013 at 7:20 pm

Nice site. I really like the by license indexes of releases.



Snd Chaser says:

July 31, 2013 at 1:19 pm

From Twitter:

Giovanni Amoroso @Johnamoroso_YO

@SndChaser great! You might also like this blog <http://yo-u-turn.blogspot.co.uk>



deeload says:

July 31, 2013 at 11:00 am

2 more, well worth checking out:

<http://www.techno-locator.ru/>

and

<http://netaudio.bai-hua.org>

cheers,

deeload



Snd Chaser says:
July 31, 2013 at 11:21 am

Thanks for the additions, deeload!

I also forgot a lesser known site: <http://artistserver.com/>

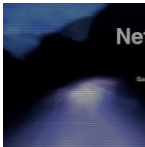
This is run by a gentleman I've known (online) for over ten years: Gideon Marken, who releases music under the name Sonic Wallpaper.

Comments are closed.


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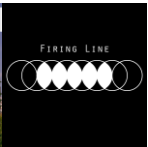
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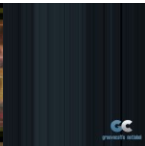
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